11. SKIDDING

A skid trail is a single lane trail used for the skidding or transporting of timber products from the stump to a landing. After the location of log landings are established and road lay-out is complete, the skid trail network is then laid out. The major considerations for skid trail placement are to minimize damage to residual trees, minimize erosion, sedimentation, and rutting.

For some forest conditions, such as very steep slopes (over 40%), unstable soil conditions (reference Table 2), and critical riparian areas (e.g. areas with vernal ponds, unique natural communities, such as dune and swale complexes), use timber harvesting techniques and equipment that minimize skidding throughout the stand (e.g. cable skidding, harvesters with knuckle boom cranes and bogey tracks - see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Wheeled Harvester/Processor with Bogey Tracks.

The Following are Considerations for the Location and Use of Skid Trails:

- Gradients of skid trails should not be steeper than 40% **(**EPA 2005). The goal is to have the average skid trail slopes be no more than 15%.
- Minimize skidding in the RMZ, as much as possible.
- When skidding in areas with steep topography, follow the contour of the slope. This reduces soil erosion and encourages revegetation. If skidding has to be done parallel to the slope, skid uphill, taking care to break the grade periodically.

- Avoid skid trail layouts that concentrate runoff into ephemeral draws or watercourses, and avoid skidding up or down ephemeral draws (See Figure 20), as this will result in accelerated soil erosion and sediment movement, as ephemeral draws act to channelize water flows.
- If using a wheeled skidder without high floatation tires, winch logs out of the RMZ or directionally fell trees so tops extend out of the RMZ and trees can be skidded without operating the skidder in the RMZ.
- Suspend skidding during wet periods such as spring breakup.
- Any skid trail necessitating the crossing of a stream will require permits from DEQ and a bridge or a culvert designed to standards acceptable by DEQ prior to DEQ issuing permits for such an activity. Logs cannot be skidded through an identifiable stream channel.
- Approaches to a water crossing should be as near to right angles (90 degrees) to the stream direction as possible.
- Climb up slope on a slant or zigzag pattern breaking the grade and avoiding long steep grades on the trail. This will reduce the potential for making gullies.
- Look for alternative skidding using several different skid trails instead of only one primary trail, unless site conditions dictate that using fewer rather than more skid trails will result in less soil disturbance.
- Skidding operations should avoid gullies, seeps, vernal ponds and other permanently wet areas.
- Upon completion of skidding operations, install water bars, particularly on skid trails on sloping and variable topography. If natural vegetation does not quickly establish on these trails, apply grass seed and cover with mulch.

Figure 20. Example of Ephemeral Draw.